

many Maine students cannot afford their tuition. Too many are being denied the opportunity that college provides.

The legislation before us today would save students thousands of dollars on their loan repayment by cutting interest rates in half. Students in Maine beginning college in the fall of 2007 would save \$2,107 on their loans, and those starting in 2011 would save \$4,210.

This bill is also consistent with the pay-as-you-go principle that my fellow Blue Dogs and I have long advocated and that the Speaker has committed to. So it will not increase the deficit one dime.

I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation to help all the young people live the American Dream.

□ 1030

#### AMERICA FERRERA GOLDEN GLOBE WIN

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate America Ferrera for winning the Golden Globe for best actress in a comedy for her work in ABC's television show "Ugly Betty." America Ferrera is a native of Los Angeles, the daughter of Honduran immigrant parents and a student at the University of Southern California, earning a degree in international relations.

As Betty Suarez, her character in "Ugly Betty," Ferrera plays a smart, young Latina professional breaking into the publishing world. The people we see in here on television and in movies have a great influence on our communities and the attitudes of Americans.

While 40 percent of American youth ages 19 and under are children of color, few of the faces that they see on television actually reflect those races and cultures. Through her work, Ms. Ferrera is breaking down barriers for Latinos and Latinas in prime-time television.

I commend America Ferrera and everyone involved in Ugly Betty for helping to break down the stereotypes and provide a role model for young Latinas. I hope we can work together to teach everyone to appreciate diversity in our country.

Congratulations, America Ferrera.

#### CONGRATULATING THE CITIES OF NORFOLK, VIRGINIA BEACH, AND PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the cities of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, and Portsmouth, Virginia, for the grand opening of a new complex that serves formerly homeless people. This is the first complex in the Nation that is financed and

supported by more than one city. This complex will serve over 60 adults from our region who formerly lived in shelters, under bridges or on the street.

Congratulations to these three cities who worked regionally and who worked together to address the very basic human need for shelter and providing other comprehensive services such as job counseling, mental health, substance abuse and drug-abuse treatment as well. Congratulations to them, and we hope other regions of the country will follow their example, and they will be a great model for our Nation.

#### COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

(Mr. KLEIN of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the health of the American economy depends on having a highly educated skilled workforce, but studies show the number one reason that students fail to attend college today is cost.

In addition to tuition, fees, interest rates on student loans have also risen. Over the last 5 years the interest rates on student loans have jumped by almost 2 percentage points, further increasing the cost of college. Many of us were dependent on student loans to go to college in the first place. I am one of them.

Recently, when I visited Pompano High School in my district, I met many exceptional students who were concerned that they would have difficulty managing tuition costs. These students in Pompano High School deserve better, as students do all over the United States. This Democrat bill would cut the interest rate in half from the current 6.8 percentage to 3.4 percent over the next 5 years.

This proposal will help over 5.5 million low- and middle-income students and their families afford a college education and a way to a better life. As a case in point, a study this year by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group estimates the average cost for a Florida student, what it will save over the cost of its life is \$4,400. That is a powerful incentive, and I ask everyone to join us in passing this legislation.

#### AGAINST NEW IRAQ POLICY

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, last week something very disturbing occurred. President Bush had an opportunity to demonstrate that he understood the country's concern, he had a chance to finally articulate a clear plan for our country's engagement in Iraq. But, instead, the President chose to escalate our involvement in Iraq's civil war by proposing a substantial increase in the number of American troops there, about half of whom are based in Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, our troops have performed with great courage. They have performed admirably in the Congress, and the American people will continue to support them and provide them with every resource that they need. But we need better leadership coming from the President and his War Cabinet. This new Democratic Congress is not going to give the President a blank check, and we will continue to demand answers to the tough questions that have not been answered.

Rather than escalating our involvement in Iraq, I believe that any plan should focus on shifting responsibility to the Iraqis so that we can begin a phased redeployment. The American people want change, of course, in Iraq, and House Democrats intend to keep pressing the President to provide it.

#### PASS THE COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am urging my colleagues today to pass the College Student Relief Act. I speak not only as a Congresswoman from New Hampshire, but also as the mother of a college student and one about to enter college.

These student loan interest rates are absolutely crippling students' ability to go to college and putting a burden on their families. These students are also deeply concerned now about what will happen when they go into the workforce and they have to pay a higher interest rate on their loans, as well as paying for higher energy costs and paying for rent and paying for all of the other expenses that young adults experience.

I urge my colleagues to please ease the pain on these students, encourage this higher education, because higher education is the key to prosperity in our country.

#### SUPPORT THE REDUCTION OF INTEREST RATES FOR STUDENT BORROWERS

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the foundation of our Nation is education. Generally speaking, those with better educations earn more, are healthier and live longer. The road to a better society is paved with education.

I want more of our people to have the opportunity to travel the road to a better society. This is why I will support H.R. 5. It cuts interest rates on subsidized student loans in half from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. It saves the typical borrower \$4,400. It provides more opportunities for more Americans to have more opportunities.

I will support H.R. 5.